

ABSTRACT

Objectives: The present study was aimed at examining the status of intestinal parasitic infections in the children of day cares and preparatory schools of the city of Khoda-bandeh.

Method: A total of 520 day care- and pre-primary school-age children in northwest Iran were tested for the presence of intestinal parasitic infections using direct smear and the standard formalin-ethyl acetate sedimentation techniques. Also, the specific "Scotch tape" test was used to identify the eggs of pinworm *Enterobius vermicularis*.

Results: Of total 520 children, 55 cases (10.6%) were infected to intestinal parasite, including 9.2% monoparasitism and 1.4% double-parasitism. The prevalence rate for protozoan infections was 7.3% and 3.65% for helminthes. *Giardia lamblia* infection was shown to have the highest prevalence rate among intestinal protozoa by 3.26%. The prevalence rate for *E. vermicularis* was 3.5% using "Scotch tape" test and stool examination. There was a significant correlation between infection with intestinal parasites and day cares ($p=0.004$). A significant correlation between infections with *E. vermicularis*, and anal itching and hand-washing by children using soap or handwashing liquid was established ($p=0.004$).

Conclusion: Infection with intestinal parasites in children of nursery schools and preschools of the study region, compared to the previous situation, is considerably decreased.

Key Words: Parasites, Prevalence, Children, Day Care, Iran